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Committee Assignments
Agriculture (Vice Chair)
Health & Long Term Care
Judiciary

Further info on BPA's proposed rate increase

On Wednesday, April 16, a group of 300 workers from Wenatchee will join another 300 workers from Bellingham's Intalco in a rally to protest BPA's proposed rate increase.

I will have the privilege to address the group at a joint bill-signing ceremony. The Speaker of the House and the President of the Senate will sign HJM 4021, which asks President Bush, the U.S. Congress and BPA to **not** raise its electricity rates.

NOTE: Please feel free to share this update with your friends and neighbors. If you would like to be on the e-mail distribution list, contact this office with your name and address.

Sen. Dale Brandland's

UPDATE FROM OLYMPIA

4/9/03

Dear Friends,

Senate Republicans broke traditional protocol last week by releasing our budget before the House of Representatives. Many Senators expressed frustration with House Democrats, as they seemed unable to agree within their own caucus. Rather than continue the waiting game (with only weeks left in the 2003 session), Senate Republicans decided jump-start the process.

We knew coming into this session that difficult decisions would have to be made in order to fill the budget hole, and we weren't surprised.

Our budget eliminates a nearly \$3 billion shortfall and leaves about \$253 million in reserves, **without raising taxes!** The proposal fills the budget hole with a three-tiered, balanced approach:

- Foregoing desired increases (\$1.2 billion, or 40 percent)
- Utilization of existing revenue (\$600 million, or 20 percent)
- Ongoing policy savings (\$1.2 billion, or 40 percent)

Foregoing desired increases includes the governor's proposal to not fund state employee and teacher COLAs (\$517 million) and to *delay* the full I-728 class size reduction funding. State employees will also have to pay a larger portion of their health care costs (\$315 million).

Utilization of existing revenues includes the transfer of money (\$560 million) collected to expand the Basic Health Plan (BHP).

Policy changes and reductions includes restructuring the BHP; changing the state pension funding method; reducing state FTEs (mostly through attrition); reforming the state tort liability system; and additional savings through the supplemental budget (mentioned to you in a previous update).

And while these policy changes result in \$1.2 billion in savings, enough capacity was created to increase salaries for beginning teachers and low-paid classified staff (\$48 million); restore \$150 million in reductions to developmentally disabled, mental health programs and nursing homes; and a continuation of key High Tech and Rural research and development tax incentives.

Hard choices were made, but our budget allows us to live within our means while protecting our most vulnerable citizens, helping our economy, and filling in one of the worst budget holes in our state's history.

It has been a pleasure to hear from so many of you this session via e-mail, phone calls and letters. Knowing your ideas, problems and concerns helps me tremendously as I represent you in Olympia.

Dale E. Brandland, 42nd Legislative District